# Passive voice

Look at these examples to see how the passive voice is used.

A lot of olive oil **is produced** in Italy.This book **was written** by Angela Davis.The suspect **will be released** tomorrow.This product **has not been tested** on animals.

Read the explanation to learn more.

Grammar explanation

We use the passive voice to change the focus of the sentence.

*My bike was stolen.* (passive – focus on *my bike*)  
*Someone stole my bike.* (active – focus on *someone*)

We often use the passive:

* when we prefer not to mention who or what does the action (for example, it's not known, it's obvious or we don't want to say)
* so that we can start a sentence with the most important or most logical information
* in more formal or scientific writing.

How we make the passive

We make the passive using the verb *be* + past participle. We start the sentence with the object.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Avatar | *was* | *directed by James Cameron.* |
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Object | + *be* + | past participle |

It is not always necessary to add who or what did the action.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *My flight* | *is* | *cancelled.* |
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Object | + *be* + | past participle |

Only the form of *be* changes to make the tense. The past participle stays the same. Here are examples of the passive in its most common tenses.

| Tense | Example | Structure |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Present simple | *Alioli is made from oil, garlic and salt.* | *is/are* + past participle |
| Present continuous | *The hall is being painted this week.* | *is/are being* + past participle |
| Past simple | *John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.* | *was/were* + past participle |
| Past continuous | *The signs were being put up last week.* | *was/were being* + past participle |
| Present perfect | *Oranges have been grown here for centuries.* | *has/have been* + past participle |
| Past perfect | *When he got home, he found that his flat had been burgled.* | *hjjjhhad been* + past participle |
| Future simple | *The work will be finished next week.* | *will be* + past participle |